So you wanna be a HACKER huh? <Bwahahaha!> It's a state-of-MIND! ..you can induce it - but only if you are willing to drive yourself mad enough! Go read and practice until you have mastered at least Assembly language and Intermediate Level Electronics! Without this foundation you'll be just another little geek, who might know the magic words to the spell but dosent understand what he's doing! So RTFM! ..so what does that mean? Read The Fucking Manual! You will be sooo amazed at how easy most things are if you just try to read the manual first! The truth is: Most people cant read. Or they read poorly if they read at all. So if you can't really read...STOP RIGHT HERE. GO learn to read first. If you can't read at a minimum 12th Grade level you cant be a hacker. Reading is the basic skill you must have to do EVERYTHING BEYOND THIS POINT.

Tell your friends you cant party...you're busy. Spend at least 4 hours a day at your new-found fascination...or decide right here and now that you cant cut it! If you CAN, get a copy of MINIX or LINUX...start learning about OPERATING SYSTEMS. Then start your 1st real hack...try building a computer-controlled, DTMF dialer card for your cheap PC...write the code to use it with, make it a TSR to keep life interesting...now port it to MINIX or whatever ...better yet, port it as an IOCTL call at kernel level! You keep reading...

Now you're ready to take on something more complex - go to the Library, start a literature search; topic: Telephone Technologies. RTFM! Learm about the ancient cross-bar, the Pre-ESS systems, the fab MFTSS, the TELEX boxes and circuits...keep reading...buy up an older, cheap (like under $50) cellular phone...by this time you should already have a subscription to 'Nuts & Volts" as well as a few other grassroots technology pubs....buy a copy of the "Cellular Hacker's Bible"....start by doing something simple.. ..disassemble and re-write the phone`s control ROM to allow it to function as an 800MHZ scanner...hopefully you've assembled a large array of tools and test gear by now. You've got a good dual-trace scope, some pc-based PROM burner, a signal generator, a logic probe or two, maybe even a microprocessor-emulator for the 5051, the Z80, the 68010 or something....you may have been dragged into some fields-afar by life - incorporate them: If somebody drasgged you into SCUBA, build your own sonar. If you have gotten interested in amateur radio, you can build a lot of swell stuff...I recommend you checkout Packet's AX25A level2 protocol...very slick stuff! If your bud's are all into motors, take a whak at doing your own Performance PROMS for GM's F.I. and spark advance curves...or try adapting some Volkswagen/BOSCHE Kjetronics F.I. to a Harley Davidson!..maybe you're into music so you buy a synthesizer and learn all about electronic music, you start hacking analog modules and build a nicer synth than you could buy! Then you interface it to a MIDI port on a cheap 286AT and then hack up some sequencer software, or buy some and then disassemble it to fix all the bugs! You keep reading...

By now most of your friends are also "far into the pudding", you have either gained 50 lbs or gone totally skinny...your skin tone is 2 shades lighter from being indoors so long...most of the opposite sex is either totally freaked by or with you - they either dig you, or they dont!...you're probably knocking on the door of what will be a $60K+/yr job as a systems analyst...and you are well-aware that 90% of the people in this world can't talk their way out of a badly cooked steak at the local eatery, let alone install a new motherboard in their PC! So you pick up some extra cash on doing shit like that for the straights...you keep reading, and RTFM'ing higher and higher, learning about networks...the VCR breaks down and your SO bitches about having to wait till monday to have it fixed...you fix it in about 40 minutes....the next day the clothes dryer starts to make squeeking noises like a 50' mouse, you've never fixed one before - but somehow it's not that difficult to open the bastard up and find the squeek and fix it...and suddenly it dawns on you that hacking code or hardware is pretty much the same! You keep reading...

Congrats, you are now a real hacker. Absolutly nothing but a lack of time (or in some cases money) can stop you. You are a true Technologic Philosopher...you can function in places a mere Engineer or Scientist would truly FEAR TO TREAD! You can read better than Evelyn Wood, you have a collection of tools that would make a Master Machinist and a Prototype EE or ME cry. You can calculate series and parallel resonant circuits in your head. You can fix any consumer appliance - if you can get the parts. Your car has either become one of your main hacks or you'ver deligated the job to a mechanic who you have found to be a fellow hacker; and you work on his homebrew 68010 unix box...because you've got a 68010 emulator and he works on your car because that's the kind he specializes in! Maybe you trade services with people for 50% of what ordinary people have to BUY WITH CASH!...you keep reading...

(this is the stage where the author now finds himself...16 years into a career at a Fortune 5 company and age 42...still reading... your mileage may vary! <-((that's my code too! I co-wrote VEEP, (vehicle-economy-emissions-program, a complete auto-simulator, written in Fortran-5 for the Univac 1108 system using punch-cards!) for the Ford Foundation and the DOT while at JPL in 1973)) )

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